

Bell companies operate an "essential facility", and should have to accommodate other ISP firms that wish to purchase access from them. This wholesale provisioning will stimulate competition and be of benefit to the consumers. To not do so would cripple the '96 Telecom Act. Chairman Powell: Please do not sell out to BIG BUSINESS, at the expense of competition and the small businesses of our country.

Broadband access in my area is a joke. The incumbent players, the telco and the cable companies, know they have the upper hand and use it to consistently provide poor quality broadband services, when they choose to provide it at all. I have several acquaintances who are unable to get broadband at all; I was lucky enough to be in an area served by a third-party ISP (the "big guys" finally decided my area was important in Dec 2002). If consumer broadband is ever to be successful, third party ISP's must be given a chance to compete. My experience with third party ISP's over the last six years has been that they generally have superior technical knowledge and higher quality of service than the local telco or cable company.